

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEORY-BASED PRACTICE METHOD TO TEACH ESP COURSE FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION OF IAIN TULUNGAGUNG: STUDENTS' RESPONSES

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Abstract: This descriptive research is done in response to the growing demand for highly proficient speakers of specialized academic and workplace English. In Indonesia, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of EFL teaching today. Hence, to implement theory-based practice to teach ESP course is significant. In implementing this teaching technique, the students of English Education of IAIN Tulungagung were equipped with knowledge on designing ESP program preceded with learning content knowledge of ESP and doing need analysis. The students' responses indicate that beyond some complicated tasks- students discussion, doing need analysis, drafting and revising the design of ESP program- that they had to do in completing this course, they think that they have good confidence to teach ESP because they have an experience on how to design an appropriate ESP program and know what they have to do to teach ESP. Indeed, this research shows that the implementation of theory based practice technique to teach ESP course for students of English Education is proved to be meaningful.

Keywords: *ESP, theory-based practice method*

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an exciting movement in English language education that is opening up rich opportunities for English teachers and researchers in new professional domains. In Indonesia, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of EFL teaching today. Its development is reflected in the increasing number of ESP courses offered in some schools and colleges such as *State Islamic Religion Institute of Tulungagung* (hereafter abbreviated as IAIN Tulungagung).

ESP course is offered as elective course for students of English Education. Yet, there are increasing number of the students taking ESP course as their choice. This is due to the fact that in accordance to the writer's need analysis conducted by interviewing those taken ESP course, they are aware of the increasing number of several groups of people around Tulungagung who need English for specific purposes. For example, English is learnt for the sake of being Indonesian workers in some English speaking countries, that of being selected as being the champion of "*Kakang-Mbakyu*- a program held by Tourism Department of Blitar regency, that of being able to promote the local products such as garments, marbles/marmoreal overseas. Moreover, there are also some educational institutions which offer various study programs other than English, e.g., Nursery Department, Business Department, Economics Department, and still many others, which require the students to learn English for specific purposes. Therefore, English learnt should also be in line with the purposes of their study programs.

ESP has characteristics such as it meets specific needs of the learners; makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves, and is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre (Dudley-Evan, 1998). In line with this, Orr (2002) states that ESP possesses three specific referents in the world of English language education: 1). Specific subsets of English language that are required to carry out specific tasks for specific purposes; 2). A branch of a language education that studies and teaches subsets of English to assist learners in successfully carrying out specific tasks for specific purposes; 3). A movement that has popularized the ESP profession and its work with ESP discourse. An ESP teacher as according to Fiorito (2005) then should play many roles such as to organize course, to set learning objectives, to establish a positive learning environment in the classroom, and to evaluate students progress.

In response to the fruitful increases number of students taking ESP Course, as a lecturer of that course, the researcher needs to consider what the students' need to be English teacher teaching English for specific purposes. Accordingly, it is important to prepare and equip the students with knowledge useful to teach English for specific purposes and to train them to design ESP Program. Therefore, to implement a theory based practice in teaching ESP for students of English Education of IAIN Tulungagung is significant. The term theory-based practice method is used to describe the strategy of teaching and learning activities by integrating and linking theory to practice. The strategy which integrates theory into practice has taken place in UK in the past few years (Galton, 2000). This teaching approach is rooted from *theory guided practice* and *evidence-based practice* implemented in nursing practices.

This study is therefore directed to know the students' responses on implementing a theory-based practice to teach ESP. For this purpose, the research questions are formulated into: 1). How is the implementation of a theory-Based method to teach ESP course for students of English Education of IAIN Tulungagung?; 2). What are the students' responses in terms of the strength and the weaknesses on the implication of this theory – based practice method to teach ESP course for students of English Education of IAIN Tulungagung?

Method

The study on students' responses of the implementation of theory-based practice was descriptively conducted in a class of ESP course in English Education of IAIN Tulungagung. The class consisted of 27 students. The researcher acted as the lecturer of this ESP course. In applying this strategy, students have an opportunity to apply theory and principles of ESP and put them into practical use. With this theory-based practice, a large part of class time is used for workshops where students with the help of the lecturer work together in groups to evaluate, adapt and design ESP program based on the needs of the learners. Some of the outputs from these workshops were included in students' assignments and project. The students were expected to find time between sessions to do further work on developing ESP Program that they start by doing need analysis in addition to reading hand out provided by the lecturer and some other supporting texts related to ESP. The assessment for this course is doing classroom written test in the first half of semester and designing ESP Program in the second half.

The Implementation of the Theory-Based Practice

To implement this theory based practice, there are some procedures, namely teaching preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Teaching Preparation

In the first meeting, the teacher invites the students to make instructional contract. The instructional contract written in the form of course outline distributed to each student is used as the guideline to conduct the instructional activities.

Implementation

Prior to designing ESP Program, the researcher spent about 5 first meetings to explain theories on the nature of ESP, ESP Programs and to discuss various case studies of ESP Programs available in Orr, 2002. After passing written test conducted in the sixth meeting, students working in a group of three started to do need analysis and to design ESP Program appropriate to the needs of community in their surroundings.

In doing need analysis, they are assigned to go to institutions such as formal educational institutions, BLK, Course institutions, tourism department, and local companies in their surroundings to analyze the needs of ESP Programs. To get rich information on the needs of ESP Program in those institutions, they are assigned to conduct interview to the potential interviewees directly engaged in ESP Program. This need analysis was done together with their peers sharing common interest. On the basis of the result of the need analysis, the researcher guided students to start designing ESP Program consisting of the name of ESP Program, Introduction, Context-admission and students' profile-, and Description-course designed, materials, teaching and learning activities, and assessment.

The researcher invited the students to consult their draft in order to get feedback which covers the appropriateness of the design of ESP Program and need analysis. Subsequently they revise the draft accordingly. The students' final product of ESP Program was then submitted as the final project.

Evaluation

To evaluate the implementation of the theory based practice method, the researcher invited the students to give responses on the implication of this teaching and learning technique. This was conducted in the final meeting of the course. The responses cover the strength and weakness of implementing this teaching technique to teach ESP for students of English Education.

Finding and Discussion

The students' written responses mainly reveal that using a theory-based practice is first considered to be difficult and it requires working hard. This is due to the fact that they do not only review some literatures related to ESP and ESP Programs but also analyzing study cases on ESP Programs and then designing the ESP Program. It is not an easy work to do because they have to work both with their classmates and people having engaged in ESP Programs. Hence, the students are ought to have good time management in order that they can complete the project of designing ESP Program in the scheduled time. Moreover, they have to have good personality in order to be able to successfully get rich and meaningful information in conducting need analysis.

Aside from the weakness of the implication of a theory-based practice, the students thought that this instructional technique is believed to be more effective to teach ESP Course for students of English Education than using a whole theory-learning basis because the lecturer can facilitate the conduct of effective teaching and learning practices. The students are not only able to understand the theories of ESP and ESP Programs but also able to answer the challenging of the need of ESP Program when they come to be English teachers who have to be available to answer the needs of teaching and learning English for learners in Universities and those in work fields. This instructional technique encourages meaning-making by connecting scientific phenomena to students' lived experiences and knowledge.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The overall findings can be summarized that students of English Department are pedagogically innovative with the implication of theory based practice approach to teach ESP. Regardless the limitation in terms of time and the higher requirement of working harder to achieve either the general and specific objectives of the ESP course, this theory based practice approach leads them to have rich experience as ESP Program designers which are later useful for them to get involved in teaching and learning English for specific purposes. This teaching technique is then considered to be applicable in any colleges offering common characteristics with what has been in IAIN Tulungagung.

However, it is suggested that anybody applying this theory-based practice should strictly hold the instructional contract. Moreover, this teaching and learning technique is better implemented in a small class of about 20 students. Since, it takes more time to well implement this instructional technique, it is better to provide the students with longer time – ideally it takes two semesters. Thus an effective pedagogy requires that educational theory needs to be integrated with teacher's *craft knowledge*, that is knowledge of *what works in practice*.

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